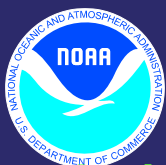


# **Dangerous Winter Storm is on our doorstep!!**

**20 December 2008**

**National Weather Service – Seattle/Tacoma**





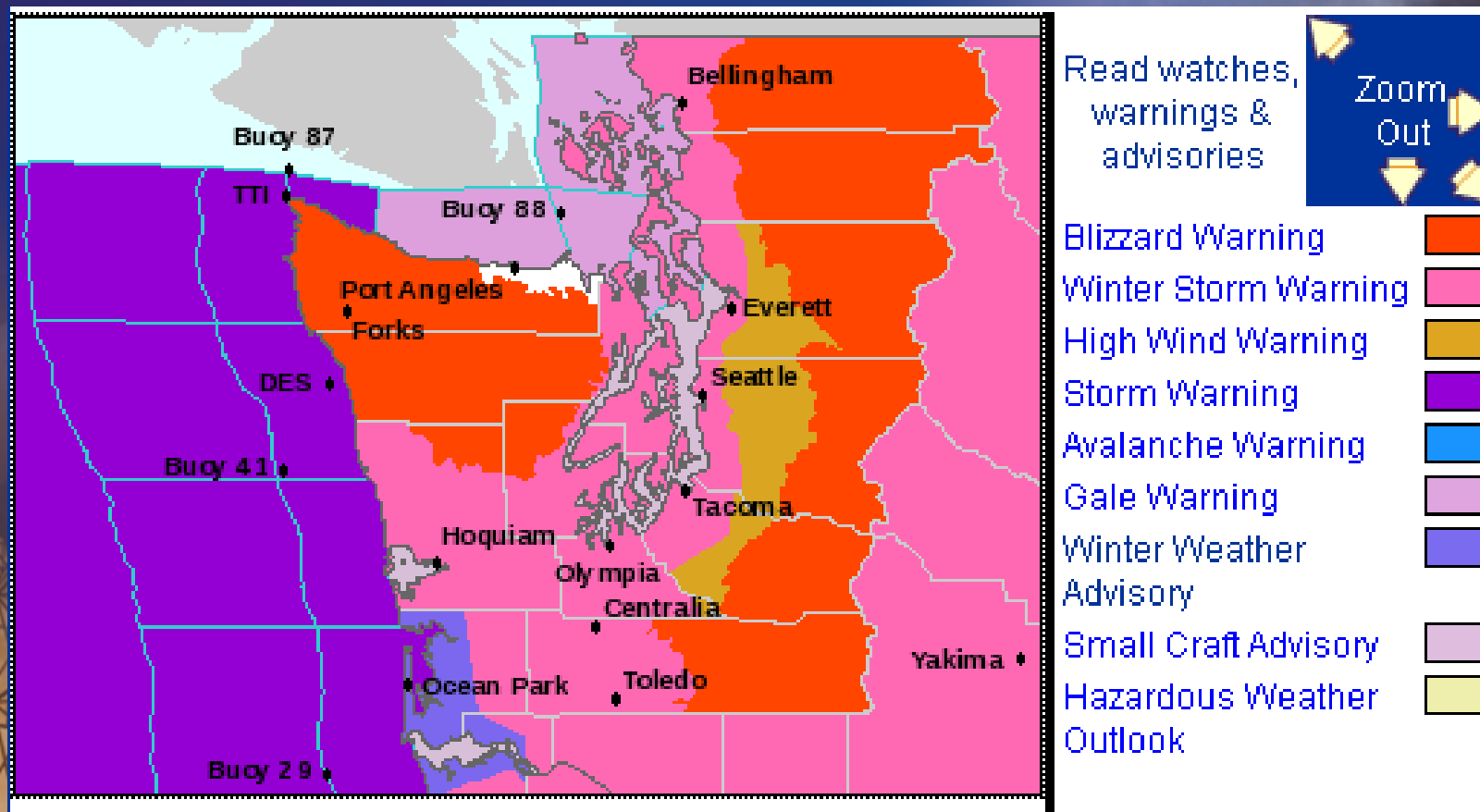
# Overview

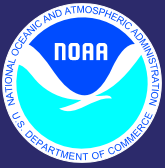


- **An intense Pacific storm is just off the coast and taking aim on Western Washington.**
- **This will be a major winter storm that will be life threatening and disruptive to transportation and power for significant parts of Western Washington.**
- **Previous forecasts are on track.**
- **Where we are now:**
  - It is snowing on the coast and has spread into the south Puget Sound – conditions are deteriorating quickly
  - It is also snowing in the Olympics and Cascade passes
  - Strong winds have developed in western Clallam County
- **The most severe threats include:**
  - **Blizzard conditions in the mountain passes and the area of the west Strait**
  - **High Wind in the East Puget Sound Lowlands**
  - **Snow, sleet, and freezing rain across much of the lowlands:**
    - *Heaviest snow - the Olympics, west Strait, Southwest Interior and Hood Canal area*
    - *Greatest risk of sleet and freezing rain - Tacoma southward through Olympia to the coast*
    - *Least amount of snow – east Puget Sound areas especially closer to the Cascades, the north Olympic Peninsula and the Northwest Interior*



# Current Warnings

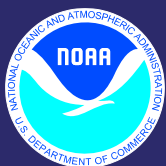




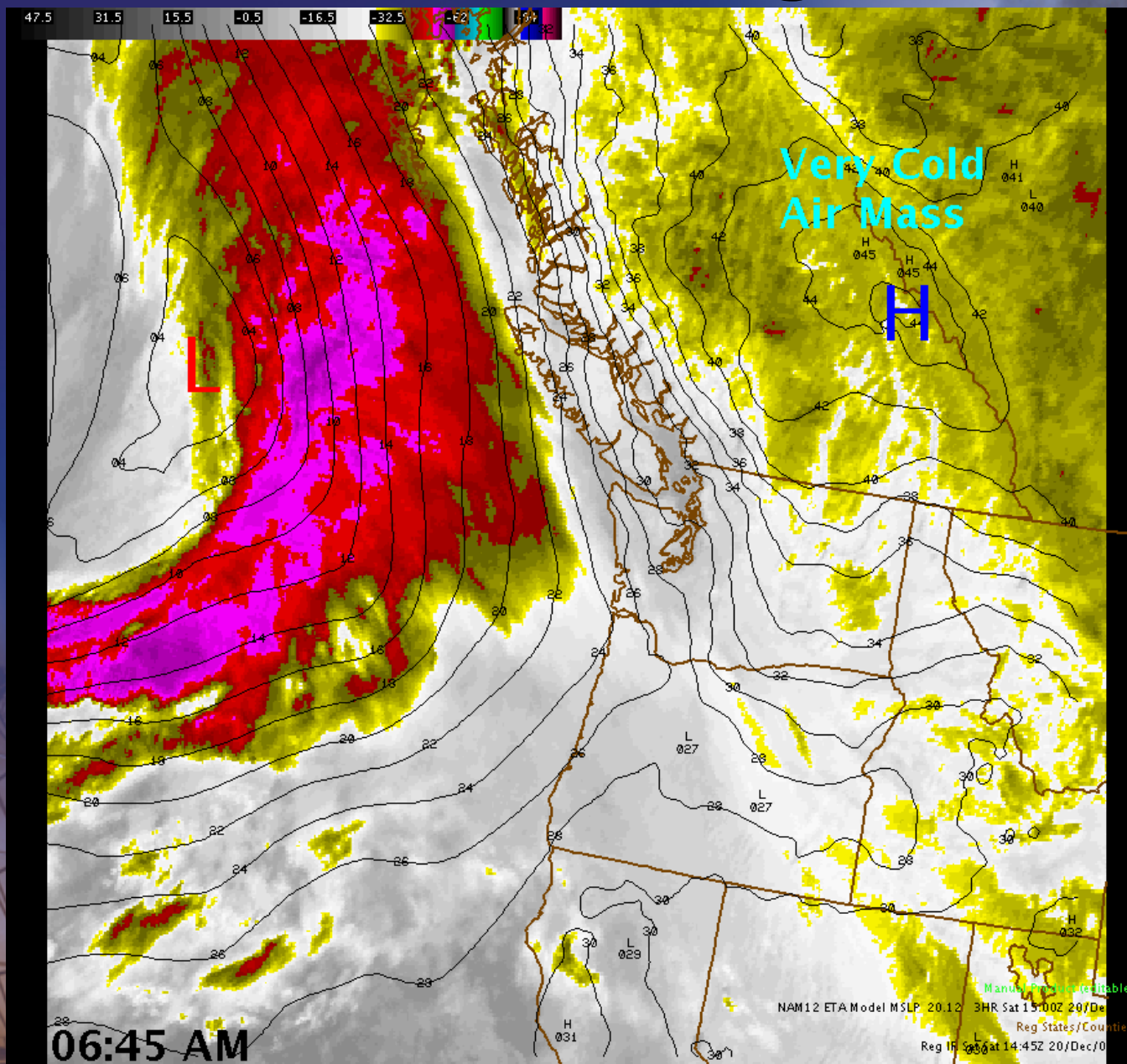
# What is a Blizzard?

- The National Weather Service defines a blizzard as a storm that contains:
  - *large amounts of snow OR blowing snow*
  - *winds in excess of 35 mph*
  - *visibilities of less than 1/4 mile for an extended period of time (at least 3 hours).*

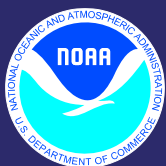




# Satellite Image



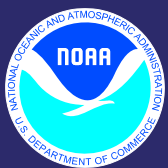




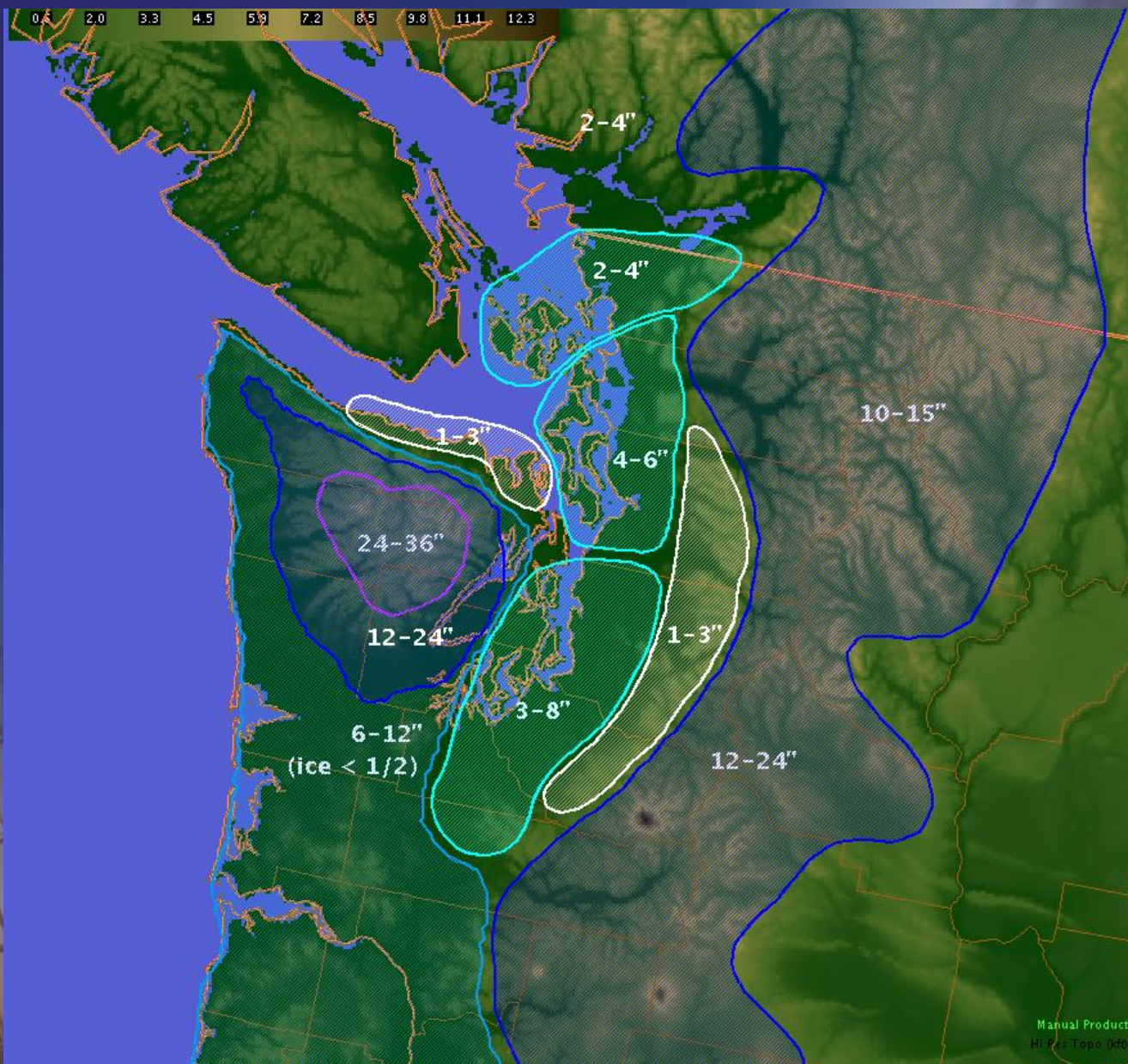
# Wind



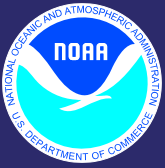




# Snow/Ice



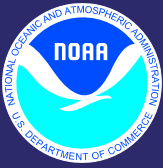




# Timing and Impacts

- **This afternoon**
  - *Blizzard conditions north coast and west Strait*
  - *Very strong winds near the Cascades*
    - Winds will develop this afternoon....likely reaching Warning criteria (sustained 40 mph; gusts greater than 58 mph) late this afternoon
    - By later this evening there is the threat of sustained winds 50 to 60 mph with gusts to 75 mph or greater
      - *Structural damage, road closures, downed trees, and power lines.*
  - *Snow moving in from the southwest*
    - It is already snowing along the coast, the Olympics and Cascades
    - Will spread to the central Puget Sound later this afternoon or early evening; North Interior this evening
      - *Most roads will become snow covered by evening*
  - *Highs – generally in the twenties*

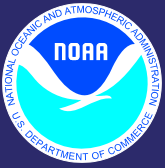




# Timing and Impacts

- **Tonight**

- ***Blizzard conditions in the west Strait area and Cascade Passes (winds exceeding 35 mph; visibilities < ¼ mi)***
- ***Very strong winds near the Cascades***
  - Ongoing threat of sustained winds 50 to 60 mph with gusts to 75 mph or greater
- ***Widespread Snow***
  - Heaviest in the Olympics, west Strait, Southwest Interior and Hood Canal (could exceed 2 inches an hour)
  - Least in the north Cascades, North Interior, East Strait, and the East Puget Sound Lowlands
- ***Sleet and Freezing Rain***
  - Greatest threat southwest interior and coast, spreading northeast to about Tacoma
- ***Temperatures – gradually moderating into the upper 20s and lower 30s***



# Timing and Impacts

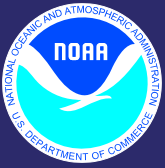
- **Sunday**

- *Strong winds ending mid-morning*
- *Gradually decreasing precipitation as a mix of rain and snow*
- *Potential for some ponding of water due to frozen and blocked drains*
- *High temperatures lower 30s to lower 40s.*

- **Sunday Night**

- *Second system moving onshore to our south*
- *Another round of snow for the mountains*
- *Renewed threat of snow for interior lowlands*
- *Rain for the coast*





# Impacts Summary


- **The Week Ahead**

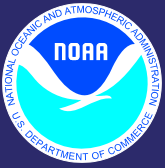
- *Looks to be continued unseasonably cool, but not as cold as it has been*
- *Forecast guidance is highly variable ???*
  - Christmas Eve looks more wet than white
  - Christmas day cooler with a rain/snow mix
- *No immediate threat of a major warm-up, heavy rain, and rapid melt of accumulated lowland snow*
- **Stay Tuned !!**

# Avalanche Warning Sunday for the Olympics and Cascades

- Strong winds will cause relatively warm dense snow to load existing cold shallow snow Saturday night and Sunday morning
- Potentially dangerous back country snow conditions
- Remember that unopened ski areas will also have back country conditions such as Alpental



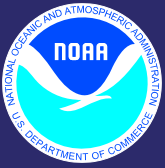
- 
- Back country travelers need to recognize and avoid avalanche terrain
  - Cold weather may allow these conditions to persist next week
  - Information provided by the NW Weather and Avalanche Center
  - See [www.nwac.us](http://www.nwac.us) for details



# Resources

- [weather.gov/seattle/](https://weather.gov/seattle/) – NWS Seattle web site
  - Area Forecast Discussions (Text and new Graphical)
  - Doppler weather radar and satellite imagery loops
  - Latest forecasts and warning statements
- [nwac.us](https://nwac.us) – Northwest Weather and Avalanche Center
- [wsdot.wa.gov](https://wsdot.wa.gov) – Washington State Dept. of Transportation

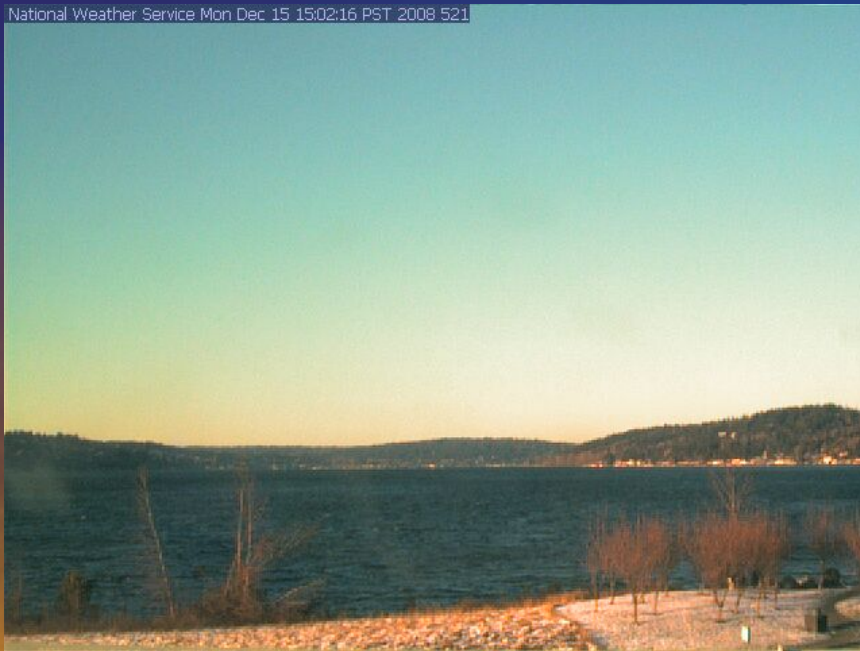




# Questions?



National Weather Service Mon Dec 15 15:02:16 PST 2008 521



- **Thank you for attending**

**View Tue out NWS Seattle windows facing  
north from webcam on web page**

